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THE TORTURE OF ANIMALS AND ITS EFFECT UPON THE DEATH RATE.



*Being a reprint by permission from the CONTEMPORARY
REVIEW, of a controversy between*

MR. STEPHEN COLERIDGE and

MR. STEPHEN PAGET.

LONDON :

HORACE MARSHALL & SON,

TEMPLE HOUSE, TEMPLE AVENUE, AND 125, FLEET STREET, E.C.



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REGISTRAR- GENERAL.

THE FORD,
GREYWELL,
HAMPSHIRE,
September, 1902.

DEAR MR. REGISTRAR-GENERAL,

I have for many years perused the tables of your annual reports, which bear upon them the superscription that they are "presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of His Majesty," with an unquestioning faith in the accuracy and impartiality of your statements born of reverence for your august office.

And that faith, originally entertained implicitly without examination, has been confirmed and established by the study of each succeeding report.

I have asked myself whether it were possible for any man to display greater indifference to danger in the cause of truth than to inform mankind without circumlocution that in the last twelve years there have been three during which more people were killed by vaccination than by the disease it claims to prevent.

I imagine that I should have continued to extend an indefinite measure of trust in the cold detachment of the tables of your report, regarding them as equally far beyond the reach of criticism as fate, and as partaking of the immutability of space and the fixed stars, had not the chief newspaper of the world issued from an office of high importance and greater age than your own statements entirely irreconcilable with the figures you record.

The *Times* informs the public that its new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" has entailed an expenditure of over a hundred thousand pounds, which ceases to surprise anybody who looks at the list of contributors. It is wonderful to discover from the advertisement that there are so many professors in the whole world as have been induced to participate in the production of this work!

No one who devoted a long spring day to the reading of the

"First Announcement" in the *Times* of the 9th of May, beginning with the claim that the book contains all knowledge, and ending with the promise of a large but secret discount to those who purchase with celerity, can have risen from the perusal unconvinced that he owed it as a duty to his pocket and his head to buy the book and believe its statements.

The volume that has dissipated in a day the accumulated statistics of your sixty-three annual reports has been presented to me by a Society in whose labours I take a friendly interest. The book contains an article entitled "Experiments on Animals," which purports to explain "the present method of experiments on animals in the United Kingdom," and to set forth the beneficent results of those experiments.

That the statements in this article, dealing with a controversy that to-day divides mankind, are put before the public with a freedom from prejudice and a dispassionate accuracy superior to your own, must be conceded by anyone who discovers that the two persons responsible for this final addition to exact knowledge upon that controversy are Mr. Stephen Paget, who has already written a book that has happily afforded as much material for a judgment against as for "the present method of experiments," and Dr. Noel Paton, who is so little concerned with either side of the controversy and so detached from the tiresome provisions of the law that he entirely forgot to procure a licence when in 1895 he himself experimentally starved kittens for fifty-six and a half hours; and although you, sir, are not concerned with the first part of the work of these gentlemen, which explains among other things how a certain Parliamentary Report other than your own is compiled, it may lend weight to their authority and contribute to the final discredit of your own to discover that in that report the single uncorroborated statement of any person (whose actions are by law subjected to inspection) that he has not broken the law is accepted as conclusive proof of his veracity.

Recognising that to a book containing all knowledge searchers after truth must turn if they would learn whether experiments upon animals have indeed led to discoveries that have lessened the mortality from any diseases, the two Professors have not hesitated to expose the invalidity of your figures and the mendacity of your reports.

It may be observed in your defence that nowhere have you ever suggested that the discovery of Glycogen by means of experiments on living animals is the cause of the continued and deplorable rise in the death rate of persons afflicted with diabetes that you have the temerity to record; but it is not easy for the enquiring student to discover the hidden motives that have led you to record a rise in the death rate of every disease that has in truth and in fact, as these professors show, almost disappeared from the world owing to the labours and discoveries of those who perform these experiments.

Anthrax is the first definite disease dealt with both by the professors and by your tables. But your figures deal with mankind, while those of the professors are confined to sheep and cattle, and therefore your statement that in 1899 a larger number of people than in any previous year died of anthrax escapes challenge and refutation.

Again in the case of consumption, as you have fortunately not attributed the decrease in the death rate from the disease which you record in recent years to the open-air treatment which has covered the country with sanatoria, your figures are not impugned. But when we reach diphtheria you stand convicted at once of flat misrepresentation.

The "Encyclopædia" tells us that "In England the antitoxin treatment was begun in the latter part of 1894. Besides its curative use, the antitoxin has also been used as a preventive to stop an outbreak of diphtheria in a school or institute or hospital or village, and with admirable success." There can be no doubt, therefore, that since 1894 the death rate from diphtheria must have been steadily decreasing in consequence of antitoxin treatment yielded to mankind by the blessed agency of experiments upon living animals; and the careless ineptitude, to use no stronger censure, of publishing such figures as I now append stands revealed by their mere repetition:—

TABLE 18. ENGLAND AND WALES. ANNUAL DEATH RATES FROM VARIOUS CAUSES, TO A MILLION LIVING PERSONS. 1881—1900.

DIPHTHERIA.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1881. | 1882. | 1883. | 1884. | 1885. | 1886. | 1887. | 1888. | 1889. | 1890. |
| 121. | 152. | 158. | 186. | 164. | 149. | 160. | 171. | 189. | 179. |
| 1891. | 1892. | 1893. | 1894. | 1895. | 1896. | 1897. | 1898. | 1899. | 1900. |
| 173. | 222. | 318. | 291. | 259. | 291. | 245. | 243. | 291. | 290. |

With regard to tetanus the "Encyclopædia" tells us that the antitoxin treatment has been practised and recorded since 1897, and although the Professors reluctantly admit that "the use of the anti-tetanus serum does not exclude the use of other drugs also," and do not deliver a final judgment against your tables, it is nevertheless difficult to give credence to your statement that only twenty-six persons died of tetanus in 1896, and that in 1900 when the serum was available the deaths from tetanus should have risen to 66!

Under the heading of Myxoedema the "Encyclopædia" tells us that "in 1888 the Clinical Society of London published an exhaustive report of 215 pages on 119 cases of the disease, giving all historical, clinical, pathological, chemical, and experimental facts: but out of 215 pages there is but half a page about treatment, of the useless old-fashioned sort." And as a result it has come to pass that "now, with little bottles of tabloids, men and women are restored to health

"who had become degenerate in body and mind, disfigured and "debased." All of which is due directly to experiments on living animals.

This being so, what possible defence can there be for your deliberate deception of the public with the figures you affect to have collected relative to the death rate from diseases of the thyroid body? * So absolutely incredible are these figures when placed in juxtaposition with the plain statements of the two professors that I quote them in full for your everlasting confusion :—

DEATHS FOR DISEASES OF THE THYROID BODY IN ENGLAND
AND WALES.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1881. | 1882. | 1883. | 1884. | 1885. | 1886. | 1887. | 1888. | 1889. | 1890. |
| 91. | 114. | 89. | 117. | 111. | 123. | 141. | 137. | 152. | 174. |
| 1891. | 1892. | 1893. | 1894. | 1895. | 1896. | 1897. | 1898. | 1899. | 1900. |
| 163. | 174. | 237. | 195. | 215. | 230. | 245. | 295. | 312. | 322. |

ANNUAL DEATH RATE FOR DISEASES OF THE THYROID BODY PER
MILLION BEINGS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1881. | 1882. | 1883. | 1884. | 1885. | 1886. | 1887. | 1888. | 1889. | 1890. |
| 3. | 4. | 3. | 4. | 4. | 4. | 5. | 5. | 5. | 6. |
| 1891. | 1892. | 1893. | 1894. | 1895. | 1896. | 1897. | 1898. | 1899. | 1900. |
| 6. | 6. | 8. | 6. | 7. | 7. | 7. | 9. | 10. | 10. |

In the case of rabies you can enjoy such consolation as may be derived from the reflection that you have nowhere committed yourself to so much as a suggestion that the compulsory introduction of the dog-muzzle has brought the death rate to nil, so that the statements of the two professors in the "Encyclopædia" that persons properly treated with Pasteur's inoculations become "proof against any outbreak of the disease" does not affect *your* report, but only demonstrates the absurd inaccuracy of medical men, newspapers, and the authorities at the Pasteur Institute itself, each of which has frequently, until 1899, when rabies disappeared altogether, reported deaths from rabies in England subsequent to the inoculations.

It would almost seem that for anyone carefully to gather statistics of deaths from any disease made the subject of investigation by way of experiments on animals invariably leads to the promulgation of inaccuracies deserving stern disclosure in the "Encyclopædia."

In the case of cholera, however, the two professors make no attack upon your tables, for though they describe Haffkine's injections (based upon experiments upon animals) as a "preventive inoculation," and

* "We class deaths from Myxoedema under diseases of the Thyroid Body." Extract from letter from the Registrar-General's Office, Somerset House, dated the 29th of August, 1902.

allude to its insertion into the bodies of 42,179 persons in India, they do not assert that a single cholera patient's life was thereby saved, but content themselves with recording that no one died of the injection. Moreover it appears that the wondrous serum is withheld from us at home, and that 547 persons were permitted to expire in 1900 in England and Wales without its intervention. I am sure everyone must agree that in a "complete library of modern knowledge," when we explore the article on typhoid fever and find that no mention is made of the death of a single soldier in South Africa from this disease after being inoculated with Wright's serum, we are bound to conclude that no such unfortunate occurrence has taken place, and that as whole regiments were certainly inoculated, the reports made by the War Office of deaths from typhoid in those regiments are as lacking in foundation as are many of your own statistics. They must all have died of something else, or be still alive.

Your own tables also for the death rate from Typhoid in England and Wales are quite absurd; for the serum has been in the possession of the faculty since 1897, yet you assert that the death rate per million living in England and Wales has risen from 245 in that year to 290 in 1900!

But not content with thus suggesting by means of false tables that these precious serums hurry the patients faster out of life instead of curing them, you have advanced to the promulgation of a yet graver error and have by implication contended in your tables dealing with the death rate from diseases of the circulatory system that a novel application of drugs in such cases, due to conclusions based upon experiments upon animals, have led to a higher death rate per million, whereas the more conscientious and unprejudiced compilers of the "Encyclopædia" show that this cannot be so.

For on the action of digitalis upon diseases of the circulation, as demonstrated by experiments on animals, they endorse the following statements of Professor Fraser that "The indications of its use in disease were thereby revolutionised, and at the same time rendered more exact; and the striking benefits which are now afforded by the use of this substance in most (cardiac) diseases were made available to humanity." And on the action of nitrite of amyl they quote with emphasis the words of Sir T. Lauder Brunton on the beneficent consequences of its use:—

"I knew from unpublished experiments on animals by Dr. A. Gamgee that nitrite of amyl had this power, and therefore tried it on the patient. My expectations were perfectly answered."

How invincible, then, must be your inaccuracy when you endeavour to get anybody to believe that the death rate per million persons from diseases of the circulatory system has risen from 1,371 in 1881 to 1,709 in 1900!

I have surely, sir, brought evidence enough from this monumental

depository of exact knowledge to prove that your tables of death rates, which you yearly present to both Houses of Parliament, stand convicted of being among the most colossal frauds of this or any age.

I regret that not being at present a member of either House it is not in my power personally to protest there against the grievous waste of public money entailed in the printing and publishing of your mendacious reports. But the great and distinguished and self-sacrificing body of experimenters upon dumb animals whose beneficent labours you presume to traduce are fortunately not without eloquent representatives at Westminster. Sir Michael Foster in the one House, and Lord Lister in the other will surely not long endure in silence the impertinences of a mere statistic collector, and to their tender mercies in the forthcoming Session of Parliament I leave your sixty-third annual report.

I am your faithful servant,

STEPHEN COLERIDGE.

MR. STEPHEN COLERIDGE'S "OPEN LETTER TO THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL."

MR. STEPHEN COLERIDGE, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the National Anti-vivisection Society (President, Lord Llangattock), published a short article in last month's CONTEMPORARY REVIEW, entitled "An Open Letter to the Registrar-General." In it, he takes this line of argument—that certain methods of treatment, discovered by the help of experiments on animals, are useless, or worse than useless, because certain diseases, with whose prevention, alleviation, or cure, these methods are in one way or another concerned, have of late years shown an increased death-rate.

It is waste of time to argue with him: for he does not much care what he says. Let me give two instances. Some time ago, he found a mistake in a book that I had written about experiments on animals; and wrote to me, accusing me of "garbling." In reply, I wrote him two private letters, one admitting my mistake, the other pointing out that he was mistaking the nature of it. He published the one letter, in the daily Press, without asking my leave, and kept silence about the other; and declared that he was publishing "a correspondence between us." I requested the publisher of the book to insert an erratum-slip in the remaining copies of it; and announced this important fact in the Press. Mr. Coleridge's Society then sent a sort of spy to the publisher's office, and bought a copy of the book, that they might see whether I was telling the truth. By one of "life's little ironies," this particular copy seems to have possessed a very keen sense of humour. The publisher declares that every remaining copy had been duly corrected: the gentleman who sold the fatal copy, over the counter, to the Society's spy, declares that he opened it first, and saw the slip in it, all fair and square. They are all, all honourable men. The conclave, who examined their precious purchase when it reached Victoria Street, declare that it contained no slip. What happened to that freakish slip I no more know or care than anybody else: but the point is that Mr. Coleridge forthwith began thumping me, all over again, in the daily Press, as a very dishonest person.

Again, a few months ago, when there was a correspondence in the *Times* on "Anti-vivisection Methods," he challenged me to prove that the things said by his Society were inaccurate: as I had just convicted a rival Society of grossly false statements. I told him that I would not make my complaints to him, but would gladly make them to any Vice-President of his Society. He replied that this was "at once a "ridiculous evasion and a personal impertinence."

Thus one cannot be sure of him: and I prefer to address the Society whose "trusted and revered leader" he is. And, on the present occasion, I am justified in taking this course; because the official journal of the Society warmly commends to its readers this Open Letter to the Registrar-General. This journal, the *Zoophilist and Animals' Defender*, is edited by a gentleman who was in great part responsible for a notorious book called the *Nine Circles*, and afterwards was concerned in certain statements which the Home Secretary declared in Parliament to be "absolutely baseless." The *Zoophilist* says:—

The attention of our readers should be directed to an article written by the Honourable Stephen Coleridge, which will appear in the October number of the *Contemporary Review*. It is written in the form of an open letter to the Registrar-General, and deals with the amazing facts disclosed by the Registrar-General's Returns with regard to the rise in the death-rate of those diseases which are said to have derived so much benefit (*sic*) from experimental research. It will be found to be amusing as well as enlightening, as it is written in a tone of ironical reproach that the Registrar-General should record facts diametrically opposed to the results claimed by vivisectors as a result of their cruel experiments on animals.

It is, of course, a very grave matter for a Society thus to puff and advertise an article which suggests that diphtheria antitoxin is worse than useless. Like the Society's disgraceful attack on the great Hospitals of London, it is a "crime against humanity." Happily, the crimes of these Societies never seem to come off. But, lest anybody should take seriously the rubbish of the *Zoophilist*, let us see what sort of thing it is that is thus commended, by their official journal, to the members of the Victoria Street Society.

The Open Letter is written in the fantastic or mock-heroic style: it pretends to scold and threaten the Registrar-General, because his facts and figures look so funny by the side of certain facts and figures contributed by me to a recent volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. (What it says about Dr. Noel Paton and me is not accurate, but neither is it important.) Why Mr. Coleridge assumes this style is best known to himself: anyhow, the official journal says that he is enlightening. Let us try to forget that he is also amusing: let us examine, as seriously as we can, his chief instances—diphtheria, myxœdema, cholera, typhoid fever, and the diseases of the circulation.

I. DIPHTHERIA.

Here he quotes the death-rate, but says nothing about the proportion of deaths to cases. This is the second time that he has done this. The first time, when the fallacy was exposed, he took refuge behind a lot of statistics : and doubtless, on the present occasion, he has some fresh and pleasant surprise in store for us. Meanwhile, let us consider what is involved in this citation of the death-rate, without the case-mortality, to show that diphtheria-antitoxin is useless or worse than useless.

According to this method of argument, umbrellas also are worse than useless, because they do not diminish the annual rain-fall. Indeed, the more umbrellas sold, the more wet days there are. If umbrellas were so useful as the umbrella-makers say, of course every increase in the umbrella-business would be followed by an improvement in the weather. The same applies to mackintoshes. Blankets, again, ought to make the thermometer go up, whereas they actually make it go down. The police, also, are worse than useless : for wherever they are most busy regulating the traffic, there the streets are most blocked. And vaccination is worse than useless, because the rush for vaccine last winter in London positively coincided with a very marked increase in the number of deaths from small-pox.

Of course, there is more diphtheria one year and less another year. Or, with the number of cases about the same, the disease may be more virulent one year and less virulent another year. Or, with the virulence the same, a smaller proportion of cases may be saved by one treatment, and a greater proportion by another treatment. What was the proportion of deaths to cases in the years before antitoxin, and what is it now? Take a long series of years, enough to eliminate any possible influence of the variableness of the virulence of the disease. Out of 1,000 patients, in any year before 1894, how many were saved? Out of 1,000 patients, in any year after 1894, how many were saved?

Mr. Coleridge seems to think that the preventive or prophylactic use of the antitoxin, apart from its curative use, is by this time general enough to exercise a visible effect on the annual death-rate. I do not know whether he is serious here : anyhow, he is utterly wrong. The prophylactic administration of the antitoxin, in sudden circumscribed outbreaks of the disease, as in a school, has indeed given admirable results, and has safeguarded many children exposed to infection :* but the notion that this preventive treatment is sufficiently general, at present, to show a result on the death-rate, is wholly absurd. We are concerned with the curative value of the antitoxin, and with that alone.

Mr. Coleridge is silent as to the results obtained in Paris, New York, Chicago, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Strasburg, Zürich, and elsewhere.

* See the *Lancet*, April 2, 1898, and January 28, 1899; the *British Medical Journal*, January 16, 1897; the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, December, 1897, and March, 1898; and, especially, *Gould's Year-Book* for 1902.

He takes only one set of figures, and those the wrong ones. Let us, like him, take one set of figures, the statistics of the Hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board.*

The antitoxin was first used in these Hospitals during the last few weeks in 1894. The few cases that were treated with it that year are excluded from consideration in the Hospital Reports. Thus 1894 is the last non-antitoxin year, and 1895 is the first antitoxin year. The proportion of death to cases, in all the Hospitals taken together, is as follows:—

| NON-ANTITOXIN YEARS. | | | ANTITOXIN YEARS. | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------|------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| 1889 | Percentage mortality... | 40.74 | 1895 | Percentage mortality... | 22.85 |
| 1890 | " " | 33.55 | 1896 | " " | 21.20 |
| 1891 | " " | 30.61 | 1897 | " " | 17.79 |
| 1892 | " " | 29.51 | 1898 | " " | 15.37 |
| 1893 | " " | 30.42 | 1899 | " " | 13.95 |
| 1894 | " " | 29.29 | 1900 | " " | 12.01 |

And to this table must be added the following table, showing the especial value of the use of the antitoxin in the early stages of the disease.

INFLUENCE OF TIME OF COMING UNDER TREATMENT.

Table showing percentage mortality in relation to day of disease on which cases came under treatment.

| Day of Disease. | | | 1894. | 1895. | Difference. |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------------|
| 1st ... | ... | ... | 22.5 | 11.7 | 10.8 |
| 2nd | ... | ... | 27.0 | 12.5 | 14.5 |
| 3rd | ... | ... | 29.4 | 22.0 | 7.4 |
| 4th... | ... | ... | 31.6 | 25.1 | 6.5 |
| 5th and over | ... | ... | 30.8 | 27.1 | 3.7 |

It is no wonder that one of the very highest authorities on diphtheria,

* See here the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xxvii., Dr. Shadwell's article on Diphtheria. "The number of cases dealt with in the five antitoxin years (1895-99) was 32,835, or an average of 6,567 a year, and the broad result is a reduction of mortality by more than one-half. It is a fair inference that the treatment saves the lives of about 1,000 children every year in London alone. This refers to all cases. Those which occur in the hospitals as a sequel to scarlet fever, and consequently come under treatment from the commencement, show very much more striking results. The case-mortality, which was 46.8 per cent. in 1892 and 58.8 per cent. in 1893, has been reduced to 3.6 per cent. since the introduction of antitoxin."

Dr. Goodall, Medical Superintendent of the Eastern Hospital, says in the *Medical Annual* of the present year, "The writer has now, "after a very large experience in the treatment of diphtheria, both "without and with antitoxic serum, no hesitation in saying that the "antitoxic treatment is *the* treatment." Or, if we prefer wider evidence, there are Siegert's colossal statistics. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*. They are based on no less than 40,038 cases, during nine years, in sixty-nine Hospitals of Germany, France, Austria, and Switzerland. He divides the nine years into a "pre-serum period" (1890—93), an "introduction year" (1894), and a "serum period" (1895—98). The general mortality, in the pre-serum period, was 41.5, and in the serum period was 16.5. The mortality of operation-cases (tracheotomy) was 60.0 in the pre-serum period, 53.7 in the introduction year, and 35.7 in the serum period. The proportion of operation-cases to all cases, in twenty-one hospitals, was 47.2 in the pre-serum period, and 27.5 in the serum period.

MYXŒDEMA.

Here Mr. Coleridge suggests that the administration of thyroid-extract (which was discovered by the help of experiments on animals) is useless, or worse than useless, in myxœdema—degeneration of certain tissues, due to certain changes in the thyroid gland—because more death from *all* diseases of the thyroid gland have been registered of late years.

I do not believe that he means this argument to be taken seriously. Probably he is only joking, or trying to "get a rise" out of somebody. For it is only of late years that myxœdema has been generally recognised. Till it was recognised, it was not diagnosed: till it was diagnosed, it was not returned as a cause of death. Again, there are many other diseases of the thyroid gland, including various forms of malignant disease. The number of deaths from myxœdema, especially since the discovery of thyroid extract, must be small indeed.

Moreover, apart from Mr. Coleridge's fallacy of argument, I must respectfully refuse to believe that he really doubts the inestimable value of this treatment, both in myxœdema and in sporadic cretinism.

CHOLERA.

Here he affects surprise that Haffkine's fluid does not reduce the death-rate of cholera. I am not sure that he recognises the fact that "English cholera" and Asiatic cholera are, to put it mildly, not the same thing. Anyhow, the prevention of cholera is not the cure of cholera: we might as well vaccinate cases of small-pox.

TYPHOID FEVER.

If he will collect all the reports hitherto published as to the results of anti-typhoid inoculation, both in South Africa and elsewhere (India, Egypt, Malta, Cyprus, Manchester, Dublin) he will find a very clear balance of lives saved, both in South Africa and elsewhere. Saved, *i.e.*, safeguarded: for prevention is not cure.

DISEASES OF THE CIRCULATION.

Here he affects surprise that the use of digitalis and nitrate (*sic*) of amyl, two drugs whose exact action was discovered by the help of experiments on animals, has not diminished the death-rate of *all diseases of the circulation*. But the Registrar-General includes among them not only every kind of disease of the heart, but also pericarditis, aneurism, senile gangrene, embolism, phlebitis, varicose veins, and 35,499 deaths from "other and undefined diseases of heart or circulatory system."

The members of the National Anti-vivisection Society must wonder to see their cause thus dragged through the mud by their trusted and revered leader. Probably this Open Letter is only a fantastic sort of joke: how can it be anything else, when it quotes death-rate without case-mortality, and confuses prevention with cure, and myxœdema with all diseases of the thyroid gland? But the official journal of the Society commends this nonsense, quite gravely. Of that journal, the less said the better: besides, it is more decent now than it used to be.

These Anti-vivisection Societies are not even all agreed among themselves: except that they all appeal for public support. They quarrel, and withering letters are written by one secretary to another. They have no common policy: they hardly know the rudiments of the work that they are trying to hinder. The "present Parliamentary policy" of Mr. Coleridge's Society is simply fatuous: and the Bill embodying it is as hard to take seriously as the *Zoophilist*. Surely it is high time that those distinguished persons who have given their support to one or other of these Societies, should exercise more restraint on the foolish nonsense that they are supposed to approve, and on the doings of their Secretaries. So much money is wasted over literature that goes into the paper-basket, and on magic-lantern lectures: and what solid results have these Societies to show for it all? What have they hindered, and what have they stopped? Have they crippled the great Hospitals, or prevented any useful discovery, or got any real influence on the Home Office, or in Parliament, or among men of science? What have they gained by bullying, heckling, or any other tactics? They are as full of promises as ever: but what they have achieved, all these years, is next to nothing.

If anybody cares to know one reason of their failure, let him look at

their literature : for example, the *Zoophilist*, with its idiotic and brutal jests, its clumsy adoration of Mr. Coleridge, its vile inaccuracy. Then, let him observe the disputes between the officials of rival Societies : for example, the venomous abuse of Mr. Coleridge by an official of the " Church Anti-Vivisection League." Then, let him observe the plan for a National Anti-vivisection Hospital : which is not yet opened, being, I believe, in Chancery, though it has a " staff " of more than forty doctors, scattered all over the Kingdom. Above everything, let him study the " present Parliamentary Policy " of the National Anti--vivisection Society, and compare it with the official letters of its trusted and revered leader, in 1898, to members of Her Majesty's Government. Failure is written large over the mean and tortuous methods of these Societies : and no wonder.

STEPHEN PAGET.

VIVISECTION EXPERIMENTS AND THE MORTALITY RETURNS.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

IN the October number of the CONTEMPORARY REVIEW I was permitted, in an open letter to the Registrar-General, to acquaint the public with the fact that wherever the vivisectioning fraternity raised the strongest claims to beneficent results arising from their practices there the death rate per million persons in England and Wales had unhappily risen.

There being seriously no gainsaying the figures of Somerset House, there remained only two desperate methods of defence open to the disconcerted experimenters. The first and most important was thoroughly to abuse me and endeavour to persuade everybody that I am a person who publishes private letters and does other unspeakable things, with whom no decent person would enter into controversy. The second was to enter into controversy with me with every circumstance of violence and intemperance of language.

No one could be selected to whom the task of prosecuting these two methods could be more congenial than Mr. Stephen Paget, but his mental talents are better suited to the first than the second, and it is diverting to observe the fury with which he pours out his vocabulary of expletives, "idiotic," "brutal," "vile," "mean," "tortuous," etc., until at the end of his breathless onslaught the imagination pictures him borne from the field in a syncope!

Mr. Paget's ideas of the point of honour seem to me novel: If I send a messenger boy to buy a book he has published he calls the innocent youth "a spy."

When he puts an unattached slip between the leaves of that book correcting an unpardonable mis-statement on a vital matter, and that slip obeys the law of gravitation and falls out when the book is opened, the circumstance is regarded by *him* as "one of life's little ironies."

When I write officially to him from the office of the National Anti-

Vivisection Society, asking him how it comes about that in this book attacking that Society, he prints this shocking mis-statement, he pretends that his reply is private and my publication of it improper when of course it was not private and my publication of it perfectly regular.

When I challenge him to produce any statement of mine in my controversies that is inaccurate, he replies that he has just convicted another Society, with which I am not connected, of grossly false statements and that consequently he will not make his complaints to me but will gladly do so to a Vice-President of my Society. This reply I characterised on a former occasion as "at once a ridiculous evasion" and a personal impertinence," and it gives me great pleasure now to repeat that retort.

One cannot but be sorry for a man who, when challenged to produce an inaccurate statement of A. has nothing better to say for himself than that the false statements of B. preclude him from accepting that challenge; and to accompany such an absurd retreat with personal impertinence is pitiable.

But, after all, Mr. Paget is more entertaining in his personalities, which form his first line of defence, than he is convincing in his statistics which form his second—and with which I will deal *seriatim*.

Under the heading of diphtheria, Mr. Paget complains that I do not quote the case mortality, but confine myself to the death rate per million persons. I cannot quote what is not to be found in the Registrar-General's returns with which alone I am dealing.

Mr. Paget says that as umbrellas do not diminish the annual rainfall, so antitoxin does not diminish the death rate from diphtheria. I agree that umbrellas are powerless to affect the annual rainfall and accept Mr. Paget's deduction that antitoxin is equally powerless to affect the annual death rate from diphtheria. If it be true that the percentage of deaths to cases has diminished, the recorded total death rate per million indicates an immense increase in reported cases.

I have heard that under the recent Public Health Act inducements to notify diphtheria among other infectious diseases are applied behind and in front of medical men in the form of a fee of half-a-crown when they do, and a fine of forty shillings when they do not notify a case. But I should hesitate to deduce from this that there might exist a financial explanation of a reported increase of this and similar diseases.

Mr. Paget perceives that as long as the Registrar-General's returns show an increase in the death rate per million they do not support the claims of the vivisectors, and he invites me to the consideration of *ex parte* professional tables compiled in "Paris, New York, Chicago, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Strasburg, Zurich and elsewhere." Perhaps these tables compiled by enthusiastic professional men with theories to befriend may proffer results different from the serene returns of

Somerset House. If so, Mr. Paget may be left to explain the contradiction as best he may.

Next as to Myxoedema, the Registrar-General's office informed me that deaths from Myxoedema are classed under "Diseases of the Thyroid Body," and the annual returns show that the death rate per million for "diseases of the thyroid body" has more than trebled since 1881.

Mr. Paget expresses the belief that I am "only joking" when I cite these facts as evidence that either the vivisectors' nostrums are no good, or that the Registrar-General is mendacious.

I will not deny that there is food for merriment here, but I am afraid Mr. Paget is too serious a person to realise at whose expense it is enjoyed.

Mr. Paget has nothing to say about Pasteur's inoculation as a rival to the muzzle in preventing rabies, so let us sincerely hope that it has gone the way of pills to prevent earthquakes and the Lister anti-septic spray.

With respect to cholera, Mr. Paget says "he (meaning me) affects surprise that Haffkine's fluid does not reduce the death rate of cholera." I can assure Mr. Paget that here he does me an injustice. The failure of any of these "fluids" to do anything but make people into whom they are squirted ill, has never surprised me. If the "fluid" squirted into people prevented the occurrence of cholera the death rate would go down. But it does not.

In the case of Dr. Wright's typhoid serum, Mr. Paget tells me that if I collect enough reports from sources other than Somerset House I shall find "a very clear balance of lives saved." I like that phrase, it is so scientific and precise. How vague and inexact are the Registrar-General's figures when set against "a very clear balance"!

Under the heading of diseases of the circulation the Registrar-General shows that the death rate from *all* of them has gone up since the vivisectors' remedies were, as Mr. Paget claims, made available "in *most* cardiac diseases."

It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose either that the wonderful remedies are not used or that they are no remedies, or that the Somerset House figures are false.

Having very carefully considered all that Mr. Paget has to say it seems to me that he has really no evidence at his disposal to show that the Registrar-General's figures that I quoted are not accurate. Mr. Paget asserts that in my "open letter" I argued, "That certain methods of treatment, discovered by the help of experiments on animals are useless, or worse than useless, because certain diseases, with whose prevention, alleviation or cure, these methods are in one way or another concerned, have of late years shown an increased death rate." He adds with his inimitable manners, "It is a waste of time to argue with him"—(and then does it).

Now this rehearsal of my argument shows that Mr. Paget altogether overstates the matter. My open letter was written merely to show, what is certainly true, that the death rate in those particular diseases to which the vivisectors have applied their most invincible prophylactics are the very ones in which the death rate has risen.

I did not assert then, nor do I suggest now, what the explanation of the portent may be. I leave that to Mr. Paget and his friends. Perhaps in Mr. Paget's own happy diction it is "one of life's little ironies."

As Mr. Paget introduces into his article an immense catalogue of subjects entirely irrelevant to the sole question raised in my open letter, I imagine it is not incumbent upon me to make any allusions to them beyond assuring him that I see no connection between the relative accuracy of his statements and those of the Registrar-General, and such matters as, whether because a paper called the *Zoophilist*, "is more decent now than it used to be," therefore, of it "the less said the better," or whether the Parliamentary policy of a certain Society is "fatuous"—(Mr. Paget's epithets are always elegant)—or whether I am subjected to "venomous abuse" by the Church Anti-Vivisection League, or whether a National Anti-Vivisection Hospital, with which I am no more connected than is Mr. Paget, is open, shut, or in Chancery. To vituperate at large on matters wholly foreign to the subject under discussion, for the mere purpose of raising prejudice with the unlettered, is a silly trick of advocacy that no man would employ who had a good case to support or any respect for the intelligence of his audience.

There is however, one irrelevant question put by Mr. Paget with which I take leave to deal forthwith. In enumerating what he deems to be the failures of the anti-vivisectionists he exclaims, "Have they crippled the great hospitals?" Mr. Paget here deliberately suggests that we wish to "cripple the great hospitals." Was there ever a more preposterous charge? Why in the world should we want to cripple them? To criticise the diversion of hospital funds from the patients to schools is to strike a blow to defend the great hospitals from being crippled. This we have done and shall continue to do. Mr. Paget cannot deny that money sufficient in the aggregate to pay for the support of at least seventy beds is at present taken from the general funds of London hospitals and paid over to schools which publish no accounts, and he has, I imagine, forgotten that our criticisms of those diversions of funds enjoy the endorsement of Sir Henry Burdett, one of the most prominent authorities on hospitals in the world.

Sir Henry Burdett is the editor of *The Hospital*,* and was reported in his own paper for the 8th of April, 1899, to have spoken as follows:—

The speaker deprecated the putting of a weapon of attack into the hands of anti-vivisectors and other agitators, by making it possible to

* Sir Henry Burdett is also a very prominent member of the distribution committee of King Edward's Fund.

say that money subscribed for the relief of the sick poor was spent on illegitimate objects, which they would do so long as any part went to the support of the medical schools, since these necessarily included bacteriological departments and assisted in physiological research. Those who entered for the law, the army, and the church were all prepared to provide for their own education, and the medical profession was recruited from precisely the same classes. In London two things were wanting: one great medical school, and fees adequate to pay for the whole organisation necessary to make a young man fit for his profession. Parents were willing to pay, and it was bad business and wrong policy to have it otherwise. So there was one direction in which hospital authorities might cut down expenses—by refusing any longer to contribute towards the cost of medical education.

In these circumstances we shall continue our efforts to prevent the crippling of the great hospitals by the “conveying” of their funds away to purposes for which they were not subscribed, and Mr. Paget would have been better advised had he restrained his sneers at those who desire to see kindness to the poor dissociated from cruelty to animals and questionable finance.

STEPHEN COLERIDGE.

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The Society advocates the total abolition of the scientific torture of animals and seeks to attain this object by every possible means. The Society does not oppose, but on the contrary supports, any and every measure for the amelioration of the present condition of vivisected animals.

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